

BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION
BIO ENERGY ACTION PLAN CONTRIBUTIONS
JUNE 11, 2007

As an introduction the Board of Forestry and Fire protection has the regulatory and policy authority for forests and natural resource protection (including fire suppression) for California. It is composed of nine members. The membership is divided into five representatives of the general public, three members from the forest industry and one member representing the range and livestock industry. The authorities are located primarily in the Public Resources Code as are the Commissions.

We have been working with the Commission and other state boards, commissions, and departments on the question of biomass utilization for the past two decades. The management of the amount and arrangement of biomass in our forests and rangeland are critical to the maintenance of Forest Health and Natural Resource Protection. The Board finds this effort to be a refreshing shift from the past business practices amongst state government, in that a broad group of state agencies are united to advance an issue that has the potential for broad public benefits. To that end we have taken actions over the last year that provide support for this united effort and have plans to further those actions this coming year:

Past and Current Efforts:

- In May of 2007 the Board adopted *"THE 2007 POLICY STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC PROGRAM OF THE BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION"*. In this document the Board adopts a number of supportive of this effort and the broader issue of Climate Change impacts to our forests. Some examples are:
 - Promote conservation of forest lands and vigorous stands, which can significantly contribute to large-scale air pollution reduction.
 - Maintain healthy forests which are vital to protecting resources from air borne waste impacts and which provide opportunities to contribute to pollution reduction through carbon sequestration.
 - Promote forest health and conserve forest lands from land use changes by providing financial opportunities to land owners who are managing their lands in ways that positively influence carbon storage.
 - Create markets for carbon and other ecosystem services to provide additional funds to landowners.
 - Refine carbon sequestration accounting and carbon trading mechanisms.
 - Encourage systems that recognize all life stages of forests and forest products.
 - Develop a contingency plan for ecological impacts of climate change, including seed banks and land trades adjusted to ranges of vegetation types.
 - Encourage counties and local governments to maintain the zoning of former industrial or light industrial production sites while reducing environmental permitting associated with using those sites, within the construct of the applicable zoning, for alternative forest product production purposes such as electrical generation.
 - Identify "biomass management zones" in key forest and range areas of California, based on known resource, contribution to the maintenance of forest health, and reduction in large high-intensity wildfires by December 31, 2007.
 - Along with Department, collaborate in further development of long-term harvest contracts or agreements with the Federal Land Management Agencies with California land holdings, in close coordination with the U. S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
 - Review and consider regulatory modifications that will further reduce harvesting costs of biomass while maintaining a balance with the protection of associated natural resource values.
- The Board has taken several regulatory actions which are:

- The Forest Fire Prevention Exemption of 2005 (provides regulatory relief to those removing commercial products for hazard reduction in the general forest area);
 - Fire Hazard Reduction Emergency Notice of 2005 (provides regulatory relief to those removing commercial products for hazard reduction in the WUI);
 - Defensible Space, 2006, Provides specifications for fire hazard reduction within 100 feet of homes;
 - Lake Tahoe Region Exemptions, 2006 (permits reduction of hazard fuels in SEZ in the Lake Tahoe basin);
 - Performance Base hazard Reduction, 2006, (provides for alternative, more cost effective slash reduction methods for commercial harvesting operations)
- Stewardship Contracts -The Board along with the Department of Forestry and Fire protection has had extensive conversations with the Regional Foresters Staff regarding the potential to use contracting authorities to help improve the processing of material made available for forest product utilization in California. This is consistent with the overall objective of maintaining and expanding a healthy forest products industry in California. The US Forest Service has assessed opportunities to increase the use of “Stewardship” contracting in locations throughout California and has made strategic investments in ground work to make those opportunities available to the public. Some examples are the east side of the Klamath National Forest, west side of the Shasta - Trinity National Forest, west side of the Tahoe National Forest, and the west side of the El Dorado National Forest. Seed money has been provided to those forests for the advance planning necessary to implement long-term forest supply contracts. The Regional Forester is providing functional staff assistance to each of these four forests to assist in making this process successful. There have been past progress in this effort as currently there 36 Stewardship contracts approved in Region V of the US Forest Service which includes. This expanded effort in California can provide additional contracts for federal fiscal year 07 (approximately 18) are planned for fiscal year 07. One of the issues associated with this expanded effort is that revenues generated from stewardship contract revert to the forest for future project activity versus being reverted to the individual local governments for use in funding schools and roads projects (Knudsen-Vandenberg funds).
- Fire Plan and General Plan Safety Element Review: Under Board strategies to provide and adjust capacity of emergency services related to natural process wildfire prevention and suppression, several statewide efforts are ongoing. These efforts help minimize fire damage and wildfire emissions and incorporate vegetative treatment programs that promote biomass utilization through fuel hazard reduction.
 - Updating comprehensive statewide fire plan to ensure adequate and efficient levels of fire protection services are available to minimize fire damage and wildfire emissions;
 - Review of Fire Safety elements of General Plans to ensure adequate local policies and goal are in place for wildfire protection and planning to minimize fire damage and wildfire emissions;
- Promotion of tax incentives to reduce hazardous fuels for projects that create and use biomass: The board is a standing member of the Board of Equalization Timber Tax Advisory Committee. In this forum, the Board is working on providing tax relief for commercial harvests that reduce fuel hazards and use biomass. Such preferential tax treatment encourages production of biomass while reducing occurrence of ghg emissions from intensive wildfires.